

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

I am a resident of Kent, CT, and would like to comment on SB 227.

Ivory policy is a subject I follow closely. I'm the author of *Ivory's Ghosts: The White Gold of History and the Fate of Elephants* and have written on ivory trade and its impact on elephants for *The Washington Post*, *World Policy Journal*, Yale Environment 360 and National Geographic News. I've been interviewed on the topic in the *Boston Globe*, *The Seattle Times* and on NPR, and lectured on it at major museums, zoos, and universities across the country.

Criminalizing the possession of legitimate (pre-ban) ivory, as called for in SB 227, is a glaring example of government overreach. Allowing continued possession of such ivory if one can obtain a "certificate of possession," but forbidding its sale, is also onerous.

Please understand: I share the growing revulsion over elephant poaching. But I join with those who are concerned that regulatory actions like SB 227 will render legitimate private collections of ivory unsalable—without compensation—while doing nothing to save elephants.

The vast majority of ivory objects in private hands have no paper trail, no former evidence of their age or status. That's because none was necessary during the pre-ban period when most of these pieces were acquired—like my 1930s Steinway piano, which has ivory keys.

Criminalizing possession of these ivories means that perfectly legitimate enterprises, from craftsmen repairing centuries-old musical instruments to art dealers selling historically important ivory antiquities to museums will simply be put out of business.

A *total* ban would only drive ivory demand underground, where it would be supplied by—no surprise—criminals catering to those willing to flout senseless regulations.

Passage of SB 227 would result in court cases brought by individuals wanting to exercise the basic right to sell property, including legitimate ivory, as well as cases that will be brought against the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection if the requirements for certificates of possession are unfairly burdensome.

I believe enough is already being done on the federal level through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife service to prevent the flow of poached ivory into this country.

I am not against regulating ivory sales or requiring the registration of ivory collections.

U.S. citizens who meet stringent requirements are allowed to buy and possess machine guns and eagle feathers from our endangered national bird; why not ivory from legitimate pre-ban sources?

I urge the Committee not to support SB 227, at least not in its present form.

If the Committee or its staff would like additional information or supporting documentation, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Sincerely,

John Frederick Walker